

Tennessee Pollution Prevention Partnership Success Story



Campbell County High School
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Jacksboro, TN 37757
www.campbell.k12.tn.us/



1-800-734-3619
www.tdec.net/dca/tp3

Chemical Disaster Averted

The Member

Campbell County High School opened in 1975, combining Jacksboro and LaFollette High Schools, with an enrollment of about 1400 students. Chemicals that had long been stored at the old schools were moved to the new school.

The Beta Club currently sponsors a paper-recycling program, and efforts are made to conserve electricity, but until joining the TP3 Green Schools Program, Campbell County High had no formal environmental program.

The Story

Between the two Biology classrooms is a large storage room that was filled on one side by chemicals, some dating back to at least the early 1970's. There were substances that today are classified as "controlled", as well as many stains, acids, a rusty can of ether, and even formaldehyde. It is frightening to think what could have happened to these chemicals in the wrong hands.

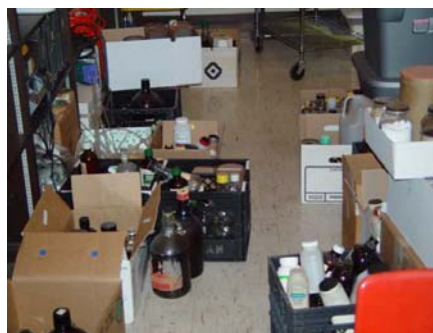
A few years ago, one of the chemistry teachers had succeeded in getting a chemical disposal for thousands of dollars. We knew there were no funds to do this again. Just when we started deeper research into the problem, we noticed an article in the fall TSTA newsletter advertising a pilot program whereby the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and the Green Schools Program were funding one school lab cleanup. This opportunity could not have been more timely, so with the blessing of the department head, Jo Stout, and Principal Clayton Ray, we filled out the application.

When we did not receive a response and were about to give up, Ken Nafe of TDEC contacted us about coming to inspect the chemicals. We had sent him an inventory of chemicals in Excel spreadsheet format, which turned out to be one of the biggest challenges for us! Mr. Nafe said Campbell County High was one of only four schools that had followed through on the application and inventory requirements, and that TDEC was going to try to help all of us.

First, we had to put all materials in containers, segregating them according to the five Fisher chemical storage categories. Members of our

department, Shelley King, Patty Kilgore, Monica Snow, Karen Davis, and Jo Stout participated in this gathering and sorting process. We labeled the containers and then looked forward to Mr. Nafe's arrival.

When he arrived in early November 2003, we donned our aprons, gloves, and safety glasses, and packed up the chemicals for transport. This work was done after school hours as a safety precaution. It was a relief to see these chemicals leave our school building.



The Success

As a result of the chemical removal, there is much more "peace of mind" in the science department. Instead of 25 feet of shelves packed with worrisome chemicals, we have shelf space for useable items. Chemicals removed from the building included: flammable liquids and solids, oxidizing liquids, corrosive acids and alkalis, reactive compounds, formaldehyde, and mercury compounds. A total of 1,181 pounds were removed and properly disposed as hazardous waste.

The Pollution Prevented

We know that if our chemicals had been piled into the back of a pickup and hauled to a landfill, any number of disasters could have resulted. We heard about one Tennessee county that wound up with a \$190,000 cleanup cost because of improper handling of a school's chemicals. We know that we saved our county from such an accident and made it a safer place in which to live and teach.

February 2004

